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Dear Phyllis,

I'm such a poor correspondent. I just love getting letters and read them to everyone and think about them, but I'm so bad about getting a letter back. And it was worse than usual, since we have been to Biloxi, Mississippi, for a national convention of Homemakers. Left Saturday, Sept. 13 and got back the 19. Jake went with me and we had a fine time, but it's a little nervous being gone during harvest time. // They had told us they wouldn't be getting seed in while we were gone, but Jake's worst expectations came true. When we got back we found they had worked almost every day we were gone. He really had conscience pangs.

They are getting along beautifully now. The fineweather has just speeded them right along. The seed corn is in, but they still have commercial corn and the soybeans. And then they'll be plowing after that. However, they are well ahead of their usual calendar times. Of course, they have been at the work so steadily that everyone is worn out and grumpy. I really welcome a big rain, to get everyone rested up.

Lee and Celia were down this weekend, but we didn't see much of them. The Audubon Society had their fall meeting at the Mary Gray Bird Sanctuary, which is just about 8 miles from here. L & C came in about 10 at night and then Lee left about 6:00 for their early morning bird walks. Celia, however, is a sleepyhead like me, so she didn't go over until about 10:00 when the meetings began.

She was just ecstatic about all the information you had found about the Symmonds burials. She hadn't known what cemetery they were buried in. She has done lots of genealogical work on Mother's family and has some dates and places back to Mother's mother's family (Edwards) and the Symmonds. I help her with what I remember Mother telling me, and wish I could remember more. I seem to know more than Lee, however, I think Mother talked more to me because I was around the house and also she wasn't as busy when I came along. You need to get together with Celia and get what she has copied off. It will save you quite a lot of work.

I will have to tell you all about the family when we're together again. Mother (Laura Maude Symmonds) was the daughter of John Madeira Symmonds and Minnie F (Edwards) Symmonds. She had an older brother Barton Claude (John remembers him, I'm sure and a younger brother who died. That is the baby whose tombstone you quoted. Mother always called him "Little Frank," and I ~~didn't~~ didn't know what his first name was until your letter. Her mother died ~~1844/1844~~ shortly after the baby was born. Her father's parents, William and Margaret Keziah Symmonds, took Claude to raise and Mother went to the Edwards side, a brother and sister who had not married, Harlan and Aunt Lottie. Aunt Lottie was a hunchback and was the post-mistress at Pittsboro. She died shortly thereafter and Mother was then taken by the same Symmonds grandparents who had Uncle Claude. You may wonder what happened to the father. Mother always resented the fact that he didn't try to keep them together. He was a school teacher. He went west, later remarried and had a child. Mother said he was an alcoholic, but I sometimes wonder about this, since he seemed to have been able to keep jobs and a wife. He may have been a drinker, but not an alcoholic. Anyway, that is the story. John Madeira Symmonds had a brother, also Barton Claude, who died young, leaving a Widow, Rena, and two young children, John and Leon. These are the Barton and Rena in your letter. The child John Symmonds was quite famous as a basketball coach at Brownsburg. Look on page 567 of the new Hendricks history for a writeup on him.

Anyway, that is just a quick run down. I will be glad to tell you all I know on this, and Celia has lots of dates and places of birth, burials, etc. We were both really puzzled at the names of those three girls who had died, as we couldn't fit them into the family at all. If you will notice their dates, they would have been almost Mother's age, and I just can't imagine why I never heard of them. Need to check a little more there, I think.

I will be glad to look into a history of Rush County for you, but need a little more information. There was a history of 1888 which has been reprinted, also an atlas of 1879 which has been reprinted. Which one were you talking about. The history is a book of ordinary size, the atlas is quite large, maybe 12 x 15. I think the book is still in print--the atlas, too, I think. As I said before, I'd love to have the church plate. W had such a good time at the homecoming. It was just that--a real homecoming for me. Jake got a good picture of John in the pulpit, too. Will get you a copy. Love, E and J.

Symmonds Burials in Sparks Cemetery
 B.C. - (Barton Claude?) 1859 - 1892
 Rena - (widow of B.C.?) dt. of John + Nancy Bellorn
 Symmonds 10-28-1863 5-28-1949 78-7-0
 Charlotte dt of Wm + M.K. d. A. 17-2-13
 Goldie May dt. of Wm + M.K. 1-10-1888 A. 2-11-28
 Margaret K. 1836 - 1910
 Minnie F. (Edwards) 6-30-1887 A. 23-4-16
 Nellie dt of Wm + M.K. 1-21-1890 A. 1-6-8
 William s. of John + Margaret Hoffman Symmonds
 9-17-1825 4-30-1903 A 77-7-13
 William F. (Frankie) 7-30-1887 A 0-3-10